

El Dorado

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Summary: Link and a 1957 Eldorado Brougham. I wrote this mostly as character work. Posting it just for fun. Will probably be a set. There is at least one more anyway...

1. Part 1

The ritual had begun with a small, pudgy hand grasping tightly to his finger as the two of them had walked down the street together. In those early days, his nephew had commented on everything he had seen; the parked cars, the window displays, the dog that just walked by... At the time, Jim Rubens had often considered paying his sister's kid to be quiet for just five minutes so he could have some peace.

The difference between that little boy, and the sullen child that shuffled beside him now, was immense. There wouldn't be any hand holding on this walk, and Jim was fine with that; the boy was too old for that sort of thing anyway. But he did miss the talking, which over the years had grown more focused, and more complex in interests. He ran his eyes over the kid's skinny, eleven year old frame. Twelve, he corrected himself; almost twelve. Had it really been that long?

"Link," he said pointing out toward the street where a blue and white Star Chief was cruising down the street, "check out that lowered '55." His nephew's eyes watched as the car drove slowly by, Little Richard's Long Tall Sally pouring from the open windows.

"Pretty swell," Link said, non-committal, and Jim started to seriously wonder if he should have bothered with their tradition this year. However as they approached the Cadillac Dealer, its windows blocked out with brown paper and painted up with teasing sales pitches, he could see the kid start to perk up with a touch of excitement.

It was a good sign.

It was still less than a year since his sister had passed away so

suddenly, leaving her family alone and in shock. The three men to whom she had been a life centering force seemed to skitter off recklessly after she was gone. Edward Larkin, her husband, had thrown himself relentlessly into his work, staying gone all hours of the day and night. Jim supposed he couldn't blame him. It would be hard to come home to a place where Annie's voice used to ring, to rooms she used to dance happily through; only to find them hopelessly empty without her there. Hell, he was only her brother and he couldn't even bring himself to remain in town; instead taking off for other parts, trying to clear his head and kill the pain.

Of course as the grown men ran and hid, they left Link - her son and only ten at the time - to face those empty rooms and empty spaces; to walk the streets she'd once walked, completely alone.

It was a mistake Jim was trying hard not to hate himself for even now as he watched those blue eyes, so like Annie's, sweep up to the covered windows. Finally, there was a spark of life behind them.

"You think there'll be anything really new?" the kid asked, placing a slender hand on the glass and looking for any cracks there might be to peek through.

"I don't know. I've been hearing some buzz though." He peered down at his watch and looked about as other people started gathering around them, talking excitedly. "We'll know in a few minutes," he said.

They waited together, standing side by side. Jim used his height and breadth, along with his well honed intimidating look, to make sure the kid had first view of the display to come. When they finally pulled the paper down from the inside, the street was filled with a collective gasp of awe.

Link's eyes grew wide and he stepped closer to the expanse of glass, his hand reaching out to trace the lines of the car in the window. "Wow," was all he said; but Jim heard it even over the people crowding in around them. People were talking loudly, pointing to each vehicle in turn, but Link was intently focused on just one: the new Eldorado.

Its black paint gleamed in the mid-September sun and the light reflected brightly off the highly polished chrome. It was a redesigned body style, reminiscent of the old but still altogether new; and Jim had to admit it was a beautiful car. The curve of the twin headlights, the brushed stainless steel hard top; every part of the thing was a work of art.

"Holy mackerel," Link breathed, and Jim laughed and tousled his dark hair.

Apparently, for the kid, it was love at first sight.

2. Part 2

"Aw shit, Jim," Edward Larkin said, his voice tinged with disapproval as he looked on from the doorway. Jim looked at him for a moment, but let the vague yet condemning comment go when his teenage nephew came

around the corner, sliding to a stop on the loose gravel of the drive.

"Oh my God!" he exclaimed on an excited laugh, staring in disbelief. "No way!"

"You betcha'," Jim said, the animated response warming his heart like nothing had in five years. He was sure he could feel his sister smiling down on him and he knew he'd done the right thing. Ed could stick it where the sun didn't shine.

"Man, she's creamedâ€¦ who did this to her?" Link walked forward hesitantly, placing a hand on the hood where some shine of the clear coat was still visible. One long finger ran gently over the dusty '_Cadillac_' emblazoned across the nose.

"Some lady in Hanover," Jim said taking another look at the salvaged car he'd hauled home that morning. Most of the '57 El Dorado Brougham was intact, but her right front fender was gone, and she was pretty badly damaged in the back end as well; not to mentionâ€¦

"The top is gone," Link said. His hands were less cautious now, exploring the damage closely and leaving finger trails in the heavy coat of dust that covered the once pristine black paint.

"Yeah, she ran it under a trailer hauler," Jim replied, laughing at the ridiculous situation.

"Damn," Link frowned, "can you get another one?"

"Well, that depends," Jim said looking at him seriously. "You want her?"

Link stopped cold in his perusal, his blue eyes wide with shock as they connected with his uncle's. "Y-you mean that? I can have her?"

"If you want her, and you're willing to put the work in to get her going; help pay the cost of the repairsâ€¦ then yeah, she's yours." He heard his brother-in-law swear softly behind him.

"Hell yeah, I want her!" Link exclaimed, clapping his hands together and looking at the automobile with new eyes, his smile so wide it could've split his face.

"Well, then you can't afford that top," Jim said, and Link's brow lowered, seemingly ready to protest. "Trust me kid, fancy TV job or no, it's out of you're reach. We're talking pure custom work; they aren't making them any more. I've got an idea for a fitting substitute though. I think you'll approve." He gave the teen a wink.

Link was grinning again in a second. "When do we start?"

Jim cast a sideways look at Ed, who just shook his head, a small smile playing at the corner of his mouth. He waved a negligent hand and walked away. "Well, I guess we can start right now if you've got your homework done," he answered, turning back to the kid.

"It is," the fifteen year old announced, already stripping out of his

school shirt and heading toward the coveralls Jim kept hanging nearby.

"Then let's get started," Jim said with a smile. He started setting up the tools and equipment they would need to get started. Link came up next to him and started looking through the tool box.

"What do I do?" he asked turning around to take another long look at the car. He was literally bouncing.

Jim tossed him a rag, "Why don't you clean her up a bit?"

Link nodded, his smile still out of control, which was a very rare sight. Happy, Jim reached out to tousle the teen's head but Link dodged.

"Hey!" he said, tossing up his hands to protect his head. "Don't touch the hair."

Jim rolled his eyes, "and so it begins."

End
file.